

Larry Hancock - A Political H Bomb

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How Johnny Roselli and William Harvey Preempted the Garrison Investigation in Washington D.C.*

Larry Hancock is a distinguished historian, lecturer and researcher; author of essential and acclaimed works on America's hidden histories: *Someone Would Have Talked*; *Nexus*; *The Awful Grace of God*; *Shadow Warfare: The History of America's Undeclared Wars*; *Surprise Attack: From Pearl Harbor to 9/11 to Benghazi* (2015).

<http://www.amazon.com/Larry-Hancock/e/B004FOXTAK>

- Due to a technical error during the original A/V recording process, this important and informative presentation was cut off just 27 minutes after it began. As a courtesy to the AARC, and in keeping with our commitment to making available significant information relating to President Kennedy's assassination, Larry repeated his entire address (audio only) which may be found at <http://www.jfkconversations.com>

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but to a number of high placed individuals in Washington DC with a story that the Kennedy administration had been involved in an effort to kill Fidel Castro and that that had backfired on the Kennedy administration that there had been a conspiracy in regard to JFK's death and the Castro had been behind it in Washington DC we know that that storyline was being pushed by John Roselli ultimately through Drew Pearson but we also know that separately the story was being promoted to other outlets for example the largest news radio station in New York City was also investigating and preparing to air a special and exactly the same story in addition some of Pearson's associates were actually taking a conspiracy story to the FBI and later in spring of that year bernardo de torres in both Miami and New Orleans would undercut District Attorney Garrison's investigation by going to depress with an extended story about a Castro involved conspiracy against JFK there are signs that there were other people leaking the same story so by early 1967 you had a lot of rumor and gossip going about a Castro originated conspiracy against JFK let's go to the next slide the

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go to the next slide the interesting thing about that is where the story really primarily seems to have originated it and one of the things that makes it particularly interesting and we'll get to that in a moment is that the source for the story was actually quite credible the story was largely spread and promoted especially in Washington the highest levels of government there by John Roselli now I'm sure many of you are familiar with John Roselli sometimes the information on Roselli is accurate sometimes it's not so I'm going to take a few minutes and discuss enough background took two Roselli so that we can really appreciate why he was a credible source for such a story Roselli was an illegal immigrant he had originally come into the United States through New York City and started out basically as your average Street hood in New York City an enforcer on the street and moved on to Chicago to do the same sort of Street strong-arm activities there under Capone but eventually he had health problems which led him to move west so much healthier clamor

and he entered the LA environment again as a Street enforcer primarily in LA in the gambling rackets la has always been a major street activity in terms of large dollar gambling and was at the time in many instances in gambling boats right offshore Roselli established himself and that and actually got involved with the National organized crime syndicate in 1928 when he accepted an assignment from them to set up a gambling wire in Los Angeles Roselli did well and in Los Angeles he was trusted he did a lot of minor tasks for the Eastern Syndicate in particular

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for the Eastern Syndicate in particular and eventually he became a point man for some high dollar investments and served as point or the Lansky Meyer Lansky Network for investing in the film industry in Hollywood sample he brokered one deal which brought in \$500,000 into Columbia Pictures so throughout the 1930s he had really moved up the level and become a major film industry conduit contact if you will for organized crime and particularly the eastern syndicate in the 1940s he went on and began involved organizing investments in gambling in other areas first in Reno Nevada and later in Las Vegas became really known for a person that could be trusted for bringing large amounts of money in and covertly putting them into gambling businesses alright we'll go to the next slide by the 1950s the 1950s Roselli had become a major player in investment in gambling he worked again for many people but a lot of them Lansky associates and and involved themselves and organizing investments in the sands the Fremont and other casinos and really built himself up a good ongoing source of money from those deals didn't have to do a lot of work the 1950s was Rosalie's decade and so much so that he became essentially the syndicate person on the west coast for not only the film industry but for doing fields in Las Vegas as as organized crime really began to move heavily into the casino operations and that earned him a place on the FBI's top

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that earned him a place on the FBI's top put on the list by 1957 because of his services and because he was quite trustworthy when Meyer Lansky took an assignment from Batista to clean up the casinos in Havana Lansky called in Roselli as his point died to go into the casinos as a manager and report on who was running an honest business well relatively honest business and who wasn't and Roselli really gained a major reputation as a player in the havana casino business but primarily that was a an assignment for Lansky and personally he remained active in Las Vegas continuing deals and moving to entertainment deals the casinos were pretty well established by that time so he became very active in facilitating entertainment coming out of Hollywood to service the hotel performance industry in Las Vegas so that begins to give you a bit of an idea who John Roselli who's whose business card referred to himself as a strategist and it certainly was not your average Street criminal I guess you'd good idea as to who Rosalie really was which becomes very important when you look at why he became a credible source in regard to possible conspiracies involving Cuba the interesting thing is that we often focus on the CIA as being the you know driving force behind Kaster assassin project sands nation projects but actually the first known recorded and well-organized attempt to kill Fidel Castro was in 1959 in York City during Castro's trip to the UN and that is attempt although it was thwarted was found to be coordinated out

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thwarted was found to be coordinated out of Las Vegas by people connected to Meyer Lansky and it is possible that Roselli was involved in some fashion certainly may have been connected to it or aware of it the interesting thing in that regard is that ultimately in the fall of 1960 when the CIA reached out to touch someone to help them work on a Kaster assassination project they ended up being introduced to John Roselli rasili by that point in time may have already had a reputation for such things I certainly had a reputation in Cuba it's interesting when the CIA contact Robert Mayhew was asked how he was led to Pitt John Roselli me he said well he had been to Las Vegas and he just knew that Roselli was the kind of guy that you at that point in time Roselli was known to Mayhew and known to several people in Washington because he had some extremely influential contacts with Washington DC lawyers and lobbyists and may

who had met him at parties in Washington DC a Roselli was extremely close to Fred black who was a serious lobbyist and a business associate of Bobby Baker and actually a neighbor of Lyndon Johnson so Roselli was was more than most people might expect in any event as this CIA push jiggled Roselli was asked to make introductions to individuals who knew people who were ed people who could operate in Havana and were willing to take on a Castro assassination activity Roselli himself accepted and got involved in it interesting thing about that however is it was became clear afterwards that Roselli did this at his own initiative it was not something that

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own initiative it was not something that was nash sanctioned by the national crime syndicate it may have been given a head nod by Meyer Lansky but it was a very dangerous project and his history would prove led to Rosalie's downfall and the downfall of pretty much everybody involved in it so it was a high-risk proposition that Roselli engaged in to and would essentially spell the end of his heyday in both Vegas and lost in Los Angeles in Hollywood let's go to the next slide and elaborate on that a little bit what we do know at this point in time is that this Castro plot itself was not nearly as compartmentalized as we would have once thought at one time we were led to believe that really nobody within CI operations nobody within the Cuba project knew about it well now we've seen documents that show that there was big money in it that Roselli himself was given some \$200,000 in cash out of the Cuban operations and it was authorized by both Bissell and JC King and countersigned by Cuban operations chief esterline so the whole point that nobody knew that there was a CIA assassination project going on it's just totally wrong it was compartmentalized but it was well known by the chief players in CIA Western Hemisphere and j-mart that's an interesting thing for us in the larger perspective but as far as the story goes in the backstory to that that newspaper column goes the bottom line was that early on in the project the whole thing became compromised the FBI learned about the CIA project due to a an arrest in a bugging thing and in Las Vegas involving

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bugging thing and in Las Vegas involving Mayhew and Giancana and The Andrews Sisters no need to go into that but the point was that first attempts in 61 all failed and the only thing that really happened is the FBI became very much aware of what the CIA was trying to do and very much aware of John Roselli and rosalee's activities at that point in time became highly compromised because Hoover was more than interested in collecting any information on this that he could and using it as leverage with RFK and with the Justice Department so at that point in time Hoover are ordered a massive surveillance project on route Roselli that began in 61 and continued and was ongoing in 1967 and as you can imagine once somebody gets that sort of FBI heat on them some of the people that have been doing business with them become a little cautious and so at that point in time by sixty to sixty three Rosalie's influences a dealmaker really began to sour going on castro assassination phase two so Roselli was doing himself no favor by his involvement in this castro project he's certainly doing himself no favor by from a financial standpoint what he might have been doing for someone else and for influential purposes that's another story but he agreed to in the fall of sixty two he agreed to continue this involvement agreed in a meeting with william harvey to participate in the CR rightful executive action program although that would not have been known to Roselli Roselli just knew that he was being asked to continue with a castro assassination attempt harvey himself had

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assassination attempt harvey himself had gotten very involved in this had worked initially with some support by james angleton the whole point of the project was to run it and largely like angleton have been running certain counterintelligence projects and set up assets to be used as communist agents that's that's another story that leads us back to CR a rifle but what I'm interested in here is talking about the fact that Brazil he did agree to participate tightly bonded with Harvey and for our purposes all of this was absolutely known to the FBI because of the surveillance that they had going on against Roselli the FBI was quite aware that the projects were continuing they were quite aware of his contacts with Harvey of the CIA and again if you were

sitting there in the FBI this is a very it's a very serious ongoing story you know that Rizzoli has syndicate connections but you know he also has some very important ongoing CIA connections and is the guy that would not know anything about a Caster assassination project that was going on at the time so this this is just a little background to establish the point of who Roselli really was and why he would have essentially instant credibility with any story that he would choose to generate all right let's go on to the next slide as you can imagine if you were in Roselle issues with the FBI tapping the phones in your apartments monitoring who your girlfriends were monitoring and and getting phone records from every hotel and motel that you travel to having your

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and motel that you travel to having your parking place under physical surveillance and and we're talking about surveillance of a level of they knew when and I've seen reports I mean there are thousands of pages of reports on this Roselli surveillance they knew when he was in LA they knew when he was at his girlfriend's they knew when his girlfriends was there they knew and when he was in Las Vegas and if he was having drinks with in Las Vegas they knew and his car was gone from his parking place this is this is just pretty massive stuff and as a matter of fact by that point in time by 1966 they had determined that he was very likely that he was indeed illegally in the country and they had begun to offer him begun to offer him deals as an informant lots of FBI pressure on Roselli lots of offers to do deals to provide information all of which was it Roselia synchronously rejected he could have had a deal anytime he wanted with the FBI for that matter if he had wanted some kind of other deal he certainly had access to people in Washington you see through Fred Black all the way to Lyndon Johnson and his staff but Roselli was not interested in doing any deals instead he went very low-profile stayed largely in LA used the money that he already had coming in from his very steals and essentially we under retirement that would be the first half of 1966 as 1966 began to go into the fall and as District Attorney Garrison began his investigations we know that among other things Garrison was very interested in some of the Cuban contacts that Leo's will have reportedly

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contacts that Leo's will have reportedly had and Garrison actually sent investigators to Miami to start looking into trying to identify photos and trying to see who in the Cuban community could help him track down these connections well ultimately that resulted in his being connected to a gentleman named Bernardo de Tourist who told him he could certainly help the district attorney and and as that turned out that was probably a major trap for Garrison I'm not going to go too far into that but that was what was happening in fall and as most of you know Garrison's investigation during the early months was kept relatively quiet it wasn't a media story it wasn't press Garrison was going about it covertly and not really many people knew about it outside New Orleans at the end of 1966 a fascinating thing however is that in December of 1966 Roselli who had been seriously attempting to keep a low profile suddenly went to Washington DC went to a very well-placed influential lawyer connected to both Lansky and Mayhew a lawyer who had done had been cleared by the CF CIA and used by the CIA in certain contacts beforehand and Roselli gave this lawyer Morgan a detailed story about the efforts to kill Fidel Castro and beyond that he told Morgan that they had resulted in the death of JFK because Castro's people had captured one of the assault team somehow turn them around and force them to go back to the United States to kill JFK now this is not the kind of story

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JFK now this is not the kind of story you want to be telling in Washington DC if you're trying to maintain a low profile and not come any further to the attention of the FBI so the one of the questions that has to be seriously asked is why would Roselli do something that's dramatic and something that's stupid that's something to think about a bit later but let's go to the next slide and see what happens with this story the first thing that Morgan did is to was to pitch the story on a media person that he knew personally Jack Anderson who was an associate of the true superpower at that point in the press through Pearson Jackie Anderson set up a meeting with Morgan and Pearson and Pearson took the story to Earl Warren as well as fascinated so

at the same time Morgan is going to the media we have people that are taking this new conspiracy story to Earl Warren to the Secret Service to Chief rally and rally passes it to the FBI and none of these individuals want anything to do with it now very interesting thing of that of course is the Secret Service may not have known no known what was going on Earl Warren may not know what was going on with John really Roselli but the FBI certainly knew that John Roselli was in a position to tell a real story about Castro assassinations and Hoover and the FBI showed no interest at all nor did they go back and tell anyone else they didn't go back and say mr. Warren you really need to look into this guy because we know that he might have the goods nothing it's just the story is thrown out at the highest levels in Washington and everybody backs off from it having become pretty frustrated with this lack

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become pretty frustrated with this lack of reception here and goes on to personally call President Johnson and relate elements of the story as that's happening on January 16th the investigation in New Orleans is beginning to become exposed and within a month it will be come public knowledge that there is a live Kennedy assassination conspiracy investigation going on in New Orleans but all that we've been talking about has occurred before that it's all backstory stuff it's all going on in Washington before anybody officially has heard these stories about the garrison investigation of course by February 18th Bernardo de Torres whose garrison had really hoped would be a big hill himself starts going to the press telling everyone that there absolutely was a conspiracy and that Fidel Castro was behind the whole thing and that that's what da years who will be revealing no doubt the press gives all kinds of coverage that and of course none of that helps Garrison's cause any at all all right let's go to the next slide so at this point in time we've got Earl Warren that has chosen to ignore this story we've got Secret Service that's chosen to ignore it we've got the FBI that's chosen to ignore it the only person who responds to this story and really starts to do anything with it is none other than President Johnson on February 20th President Johnson had called the Attorney General FARC and and by the way if you're wondering how we know all this actually lots of it is right off the White House telephone taping he called Attorney General Clark and asked him you know what was going on and was was there any talk that on the street about and any conspiracy is anybody hearing

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any conspiracy is anybody hearing anything new on this subject and Clark told them there's a matter of fact there were rumors that were now coming out of New Orleans and this isn't February that Johnson himself was somehow involved in the assassination in turn Johnson gives Clark all the details about the castro assassination projects so you have the president who starts is called just by saying kind of what's new ending up by feeding the whole story line about a castro conspiracy to attorney general clark and one of the things i love about it in the conversation johnson in his inimitable fashion says something to clark long the lines of well maybe you really need to look into this whole thing again and see if your department missed anything like okay johnson's telling the attorney general that he should have the justice department relook at the warren commission relook at the kennedy assassination or is he suggesting they just go back and look at all the evidence in the end and make sure that they have nothing that contradicts the official story which as a matter of fact is what happens certainly with the autopsy evidence that's another and much longer story in march first on march 1st garrison actually arrest take place on charges with a turret and charges him with conspiracy interestingly enough in march Johnson gets a completely separate call and this one is totally off-the-wall it's hard to fathom where this comes from but it's yet another source of a storyline that Castro was behind the assassination of JFK governor Connally of Texas actually called Johnson and tells him that he's heard this story that the United States was trying to kill Castro and Castro took it

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trying to kill Castro and Castro took it poorly and actually somehow got in contact with Oswald and the Cuba and Castro is behind this whole thing was behind this whole thing there was conspiracy and as a matter of fact the biggest news radio station in New York City CBS News wins is covering the story they've got

investigators all over the place they're sending them to Cuba and something may break any day on this where Connelly got this story we have no idea it seems to be a completely separate track than what was going on with Roselli raising the question of just exactly how broad was this whole storyline being circulated how broadly was it

END